



## **Manual Handling Safety Talk**

There are many injuries on the job caused by individuals moving objects by hand. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that strains and sprains are the most prevalent type of injury on the job. While these types of injuries can be hard to prevent it is possible through taking the right steps. Many injuries are suffered due to individuals who are willing to take risks while completing lifts.

### **Types of Injuries Sustained While Completing Lifts**

- Strains
- Sprains
- Repetitive motion injuries
- Pinch point injuries
- Struck-by injuries
- **Slips, trips, falls**

### **Best Practices for Manual Handling**

The single best protection you can take from getting an injury while completing a lift is to eliminate lifting by hand! Elimination should always be the first consideration while discussing mitigating hazards on the job. Much of the manual handling on the job can be completely eliminated through proper planning, engineering controls, or use a piece of equipment to complete the lift. When setting up any job area or placing an object down, the next person who has to move the object should be thought of. If the object is awkward or heavy and there is no room for a piece of equipment to be able to lift it then someone will have to end up handling the object again. These situations can lead to injury. Properly plan out work tasks so that objects do not need to be repeatedly lifted and moved. Each time a lift is made there is chance for injury.

A best practice is to establish a weight limit of what one person or a team of people are allowed to lift and carry on a work site. Consider a cut-off weight before mechanical means need to be used to lift the object. For example, some companies have the policy that no single person can lift an object heavier than 50lbs and a team of people cannot lift anything over 100lbs. While you may be able to handle these weights, it is good to have an established point where manual handling is no longer an option.

### **Summary**

Injuries due to manual handling can be hard to prevent, that is why eliminating as many of these lifts as possible is important. Plan out your work tasks and your work areas to reduce the chance of manual handling injuries. It is important to know your limits and not to exceed them. Even if you are strong it is easy to injure back muscles due to lifting awkward or heavy objects.

**Discussion point:** -Are we taking unnecessary risks while lifting objects?